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Chair: Ms. Miculescu (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 50: Effects of atomic radiation

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 50: Effects of atomic radiation (A/66/46, A/66/378, A/66/524; A/C.4/66/8)

1. **Mr. Weiss** (Germany), Chair of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, introduced the report of the Scientific Committee on its fifty-eighth session (A/66/46). Following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant on 11 March 2011, the Scientific Committee had offered to support Japanese scientists' efforts to assess radiation doses and radiation-related health effects. It planned to conduct a full assessment of radiation levels and effects, issuing a preliminary document in 2012 and a final assessment in the second quarter of 2013, with additional follow-up activities in subsequent years. All activities would be funded by voluntary in-kind contributions from Member States and international organizations, with recourse to the trust fund if necessary. Four expert groups would be established to focus on: data compilation and quality assurance; radionuclide releases and dispersion; dose and risk assessment; and worker doses and health effects.

2. In 2011, which marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, the Scientific Committee had published its fourth assessment of health effects due to radiation from that event. The assessment confirmed that the previous conclusions, based on much more limited data, were still valid: 28 deaths from over exposure and 134 cases of radiation sickness in 1986; increased incidence of leukaemia and cataracts; and, as of 2008, 6,000 cases of thyroid cancer among those exposed to the accident as young children. The average 20-year doses received in the Chernobyl area were of the order of magnitude of a single computerized tomography (CT) scan, with maximum values of tens of CT scans. There was no consistent evidence for any other radiation effects.

3. The previous year's resolution had requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly regarding the effects of atomic radiation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. However, such a request should have been addressed to the Scientific Committee, which had competence in those matters. That error should be corrected in order to avoid any impact on the mandate of the Scientific Committee.

4. Turning to the programme of work, he said that the report on the attribution of health effects to exposure to ionizing radiation would be published in 2012. Another report would consider uncertainties in risk estimates for cancer due to exposure to ionizing radiation. Dose levels above a certain magnitude resulted in an increased risk for cancer, but in view of the very high general incidence of cancer and high background level variability, the uncertainties of risk assessment were greater at lower levels. The report on the biological effects of selected internal emitters considered internal exposure from contaminated air and food; it found that the internal dose was not more dangerous than the external dose.

5. The Scientific Committee was assessing worldwide data on discharges from nuclear plants and other sources and was developing a methodology for estimating human exposure to apply to national data. Environmental exposure levels due to releases from nuclear power plants were well known, but not those due to releases from coal and gas plants, which also accumulated over a lifetime. Additional reports would focus on radiation risks and effects on children; the epidemiology of low dose rate radiation risks; and mechanisms of radiation actions at low doses.

6. Administrative issues yet to be resolved included the streamlining of procedures to ensure timely publication of scientific reports, the updating of data collection methods and improvement of public information work. Member States were encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund to cover unforeseen activities such as those arising in connection with the nuclear accident in Japan.

7. The Scientific Committee had 21 members, but over 120 scientists attended its annual sessions. The membership issue should be resolved in 2011 to ensure the efficiency and quality of the Scientific Committee's work. At the request of the General Assembly, the Scientific Committee had developed criteria and indicators to decide on membership and had expressed the view that the maximum number of members should remain about the same as the current level. Any major increase could compromise quality, effectiveness and efficiency. The membership issue distracted the Scientific Committee from its substantive work, and there was concern about politicization.

8. **Mr. Crick** (Secretary of the Scientific Committee), accompanying his statement with a

computerized slide presentation, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of atomic radiation in the Marshall Islands (A/66/378). The report was based on three main sources of information: the Scientific Committee's own reports on those issues, which were listed in annex I to the report; a major international assessment of the radiological conditions in Bikini Atoll coordinated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); and relevant data in the scientific literature, with many of the key references listed in annex II to the report. The Permanent Representative of the Marshall Islands to the United Nations had written to the Secretary-General to request that the report cover not only the scientific effects of atomic radiation but a range of matters, including social, cultural, developmental aspects related to testing, remediation options, issues relating to the involvement of the United Nations, including the Trusteeship Council, and future challenges and issues relating to such effects. Those concerns, although valid, went beyond the limited scientific scope of the report requested and the Secretary-General had indicated that the Organization stood ready to respond to any future instruction from the General Assembly on that matter. If a more comprehensive report on the effects of atomic radiation was requested, then the Scientific Committee could produce it.

9. The report of the Secretary-General on membership of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and the financial implications of increased membership (A/66/524) described the evolution of the membership by regional group and proposed objective criteria and indicators for any future changes. As for the financial implications, the report set out the estimated component costs for each additional member State, including travel to the annual sessions, servicing costs, the additional workload for the secretariat and additional services for extending the time for discussions. The figures might seem low in absolute terms, but were not so in the context of the allocated budget. As membership issues were detracting from the substantive work of the Scientific Committee, it would be helpful if the Fourth Committee could reach a decision on the membership issue. Clearly, any changes should enhance the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee's substantive work, while maintaining scientific authority and independence of judgement and respecting the desire for equitable geographic distribution. The General Assembly might

consider adopting a two-phase approach: first, a decision on the maximum size of the Committee and on the basis for future changes in membership; and second, a decision regarding the six applicant countries that had expressed their desire to become members since 2007.

10. **Mr. Toba** (Brazil), referring to paragraph 9 of document A/66/378, wondered whether the Secretary-General could request other United Nations agencies to contribute information on social, economic, environmental and other issues relating to radiation in the Marshall Islands. Noting that the Scientific Committee had only two African States as members, he also asked whether travel expenses were paid for representatives from developing countries or for all members of the Committee and whether the trust fund could bear any of the costs of an expansion. It would be helpful to receive more information on the situation of the trust fund.

11. **Mr. Crick** (Secretary of the Scientific Committee) said that the Secretary-General's statement that the Organization stood ready to respond to any to any future instruction from the Assembly did not imply that a major study could be undertaken without any additional funding, but an effort could certainly be made to engage with other agencies and to coordinate some action.

12. Travel expenses, without a subsistence allowance, was provided for all 21 heads of delegation, but not for other representatives. The trust fund had been established to accelerate the work of the Scientific Committee, but it might be possible to change the arrangements and make a specific request for trust fund contributions to cover travel costs. However, that would not constitute a predictable source of funding.

13. **Mr. Vidal** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the State party in the process of accession, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the associated States, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, said that he supported the request of the Government of the Marshall Islands that the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of atomic radiation should be expanded to include other issues. He also supported United Nations efforts to evaluate the consequences of nuclear tests and the effects of atomic radiation on the health of citizens and the environment in that State.

14. The Scientific Committee performed essential work in evaluating research on nuclear technologies, including medical applications, and a solution should be found to the current budgetary and administrative crisis. The trust fund administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was chronically short of funds and it would be useful to receive information on the status of the Fund over the last five years.

15. Any changes to the membership of the Scientific Committee should not affect the established members, who had demonstrated their commitment over decades of participation. The financing arrangements should be strengthened as a necessary and prior condition for membership expansion. Scientists representing Member States of the five regional groups of the United Nations should participate in the deliberations of the Scientific Committee and its Bureau on the basis of their scientific capacity and suitability and equitable geographical distribution.

16. The 25-year anniversaries of the tragedy of Chernobyl in 2012 and of Goiania in 2017, as well as the events that had occurred in Fukushima, were reminders of the need for caution and the importance of disseminating the available scientific data as broadly as possible. In accordance with Principle No. 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, all concerned citizens should have access to environmental information held by public authorities and access to judicial and administrative proceedings.

17. **Mr. Sorreta** (Philippines) said that his delegation commended the early and prompt response of the Scientific Committee to the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi facility. Other organizations, such as IAEA, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the World Health Organization (WHO), were also making important contributions. An independent assessment by the Scientific Committee would provide an authoritative reference for crafting policies to prevent and manage the effects of nuclear disasters.

18. The Philippines called on States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to undertake the actions to increase nuclear safety and security set out in the Final Outcome Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. There was a need for capacity-building in nuclear detection, nuclear

forensics and response and mitigation at the national and regional levels. His country also supported regional cooperation to share information and knowledge in the area of nuclear safety, and welcomed the establishment of the Regulatory Cooperation Forum to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices.

19. IAEA played a central role in promoting international cooperation and coordinating international efforts to strengthen global nuclear safety. In that regard, the Philippines supported the implementation of the Plan of Action based on the recommendations of the IAEA Ministerial Level Conference on Nuclear Safety held in Vienna in June 2011. IAEA should continue to provide assistance through its technical cooperation programme to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear technologies. The Agency should also continue to conduct education and training programmes.

20. A review of the global framework for emergency preparedness and response should include the updating of a number of provisions of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. As nuclear power would continue to be used for the foreseeable future, States should apply the highest standards of safety and security and the international community should be prepared to minimize the damage of any future incident and to assist the victims.

21. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan) said that his delegation had examined the report of the Secretary-General regarding membership of the United Nations Scientific Committee and the financial implications of increased membership (A/66/524). His delegation appreciated the efforts made by the Scientific Committee and its secretariat. However, the recommendations with regard to criteria for membership seemed somewhat politicized and could encourage a form of discrimination incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, there was no universally accepted review mechanism.

22. His country had made progress in the use of nuclear radiation for medical, veterinary and educational purposes. The Sudan was cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and now had a five-megawatt nuclear research facility

which was used for medicine, industry, desalinization and training.

23. **Mr. Zhao Xinli** (China) said that his delegation welcomed the increase in human resources assigned to the Scientific Committee's secretariat. Nuclear energy, which was environmentally friendly, adaptable to climate change and capable of supporting sustainable development, had become a pillar of the energy supply of many developed countries. The Fukushima nuclear accident had focused the world's attention once again on the importance of nuclear and radiation safety, which should be strengthened at all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle: from exploration, processing, transportation and storage of nuclear fuel, to the operation and decommissioning of nuclear power plants, and radioactive waste disposal.

24. As the demand for nuclear technology and the use of man-made radiation sources in industry, agriculture, medicine and scientific research were growing, it was important to maximize the benefits of atomic radiation, while minimizing its harm. The United Nations should play a broader role and encourage the international community to work in a number of areas, including the fulfilment of radiation safety responsibilities. States using nuclear technologies, especially those with advanced nuclear energy technologies, should offer technological guarantees for measuring and monitoring atomic radiation, ensuring safety and security against atomic radiation, treating victims in a timely and effective manner and disposing safely of atomic radioactive waste.

25. Radiation safety should be enhanced by formulating and improving standards for radiation measurement, radiation safety, disposal of radiation sources and protection. There was also a need to strengthen international cooperation in responding to nuclear incidents. States in which nuclear accidents occurred should provide comprehensive information as early as possible to the international community and to those countries that might be affected. The international community should strengthen its cooperation in evaluating the consequences of nuclear accidents so as to minimize transboundary radiation.

26. Efforts were needed to promote research and development for safer nuclear technology. Nuclear energy, radiological diagnosis and treatment, flaw detection and other nuclear technologies were unique and benefited mankind. States should increase their

research and development for advanced nuclear and radiation safety technologies and work together to improve nuclear and radiation safety.

27. Effective dissemination of scientific knowledge to the general public was important, as the widening application of nuclear technology brought more people into contact with radiation sources. Such dissemination could help prevent radiation accidents, prepare people to take protective measures and alleviate the effect of radiation in the case of accidents; it could also help to dispel unnecessary fear and panic.

28. The scope of studies on the effects of atomic radiation should be expanded. The impacts of radiation affected people psychologically as well as physically and were a huge drain on public resources. Further studies on the psychological effects of radiation and its impact on public resources were needed.

29. In the immediate aftermath of the Fukushima accident, the Chinese Government had launched the National Nuclear Contingency Mechanism to monitor developments and take action. Stepping up radiation monitoring and publicizing authoritative information to allay public anxiety, his Government had also organized a comprehensive safety inspection of all nuclear facilities in China, reinforced safety regulations at all nuclear facilities in operation, conducted advanced safety assessments of all nuclear power plants under construction and had suspended the review and approval of new nuclear power plant projects until a revised nuclear safety plan could be adopted. His Government had also offered to assist the Japanese Government with radiation monitoring and medical care and Chinese experts had engaged with their counterparts from Japan and other countries regarding the accident.

30. China had supported the safe development of nuclear energy technology by participating in the Generation IV International Forum (GIF) and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) and by formulating appropriate national laws, regulations and technical standards. The Government was also enhancing its management and regulation capacity in the area of radiation safety. China would continue to work with the international community to ensure that nuclear technology benefited mankind and to protect mankind from radiological harm.

31. **Mr. Hamed** (Syrian Arab Republic), commending the Scientific Committee for the

competent and objective manner in which it discharged its duties, called for greater efforts to promote awareness of the harmful effects of atomic radiation on health and the environment. He said that his Government advocated the use of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes and viewed nuclear energy as a resource to be deployed for further development and prosperity, but was concerned about the efforts to restrict developing countries' access to nuclear technologies under the guise of applying verification and non-proliferation measures.

32. The Syrian Arab Republic was at the forefront of States calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region. Indeed, it had submitted a draft resolution on the subject to the Security Council and had acceded to various international treaties on nuclear disarmament. By contrast, Israel maintained a stock of nuclear weapons yet was not subject to any international monitoring, had not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and refused to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA comprehensive safeguards, thereby posing a threat to regional security and undermining the credibility of international disarmament efforts.

33. The great east Japan earthquake of March 2011 had shown yet again that disasters could occur at any nuclear facility anywhere in the world. His delegation was deeply concerned at the potential for a major disaster posed by the existence of Israeli nuclear facilities in the region without the imposition of any controls. Indeed, as one of the designers of Israel's nuclear programme had acknowledged, the age of the facilities at Dimona left them vulnerable to problems, making them a virtual time bomb threatening the entire region. He urged the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA monitoring and eliminate its nuclear weapons. Israel had buried nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan but the international community had remained silent on the matter, thereby failing to live up to its own calls for nuclear non-proliferation. Lastly, he emphasized the need for greater international cooperation to draw attention to the dangerous effects of atomic radiation.

34. **Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq) said that his Government had reactivated the Radiation Protection Centre, the executive arm of the Radiation Prevention Authority, whose role was to develop environmental policies and

programmes on atomic radiation and track their implementation. It also issued permits for the movement of radioactive materials, monitored environmental radiation levels and issued clearance certificates for imported goods for human consumption and goods for export. The Iraqi Radioactive Source Regulatory Authority, responsible for public health and safety during medical and agricultural use of materials with low levels of radioactivity, had prepared a national emergency plan for incidents involving radioactivity, and exchanged information with the International Atomic Energy Authority and other relevant international organizations. His delegation called on United Nations institutions and agencies to contribute to the Scientific Committee's valuable work by providing more information on radiation levels and their effects.

35. **Mr. Tsymbaliuk** (Ukraine) said that a responsible and holistic approach to the peaceful use of nuclear energy was the only way to ensure the future safety of the world. In commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the Government of Ukraine had organized the Kyiv Summit on Safe and Innovative Use of Nuclear Energy, one of the outcomes of which had been the participants' unanimous recognition of the need to give priority to adequate levels of nuclear safety at every stage of nuclear energy production. He thanked the members and secretariat of the Committee for their participation in the Summit and also in the international scientific conference "Twenty-five Years after the Chernobyl Accident. Safety for the Future". He also expressed appreciation for the advance publication of the 2008 assessment of Chernobyl to make it available before the twenty-fifth anniversary.

36. The Chernobyl accident had triggered not only a revision of international nuclear safety standards, but also the creation of numerous international instruments to ensure both the highest level of nuclear safety worldwide and a related system of emergency preparedness and response. The Committee's decision to make a full assessment of the Fukushima accident was a welcome one, and data collection and compilation should be started as soon as possible.

37. His delegation was pleased to have contributed information to the Committee's publications and supported the proposal for the Committee's future programme of work, noting that its workload would expand as the use of radiation in daily life increase. It

was paradoxical that the Committee's work on Chernobyl accident had been done without Ukraine's participation as a member and he hoped that the General Assembly would approve its full membership, as envisaged in resolution 63/89.

38. **Mr. Javadekar** (India) welcomed the Committee's proposals for a scientific report on the radiological consequences of the nuclear accident at the Fukushima power plant in Japan. While the radiological consequences might not be comparable to those of the Chernobyl accident, it was important to create a multidisciplinary framework for data collection and analysis. However, a shortage of trained personnel made it a demanding task to monitor the radioactive contamination in the wake of the accident.

39. India appreciated the Committee's efforts to prepare documents on the ability to attribute health effects to exposure to ionizing radiation and on uncertainties in risk estimates for cancer due to exposure to ionizing radiation. As the Committee had accepted in its report to the previous session of the General Assembly that there was no epidemiological or experimental evidence of increased incidence of cancer for a dose of 100 mSv, it was important to revisit the linear no-threshold concept used in stipulating radiation exposure limits or workers and the general public.

40. He commended the Committee for its work on scientific annexes that addressed the methodology for estimating human exposures due to discharges, the biological effects of selected internal emitters and exposure from different options for electricity generation. As an emerging major user of nuclear power, India considered its citizens' safety to be a top priority. Any information issued by the Committee should be in a form that would not generate fear among the general public.

41. The plans to prepare a scientific annex on epidemiology relating to low-dose environmental sources were laudable, and he welcomed the fact that the Committee would take account of published work from both India and China. While the Committee's work was outstanding and the request for its enlargement understandable, financial and logistical considerations dictated that its membership should not exceed a practical limit.

42. **Mr. Hashmi** (Pakistan) said that his country had participated in the previous four sessions of the

Scientific Committee as an observer, although it had over 50 years of experience in operating radiation facilities. It had contributed to the Scientific Committee's global survey of medical radiation usage and exposures as well as to various international studies on dietary and environmental impacts of radiation. Pakistan was also conducting ongoing studies on the assessment of radiation doses to patients and on naturally occurring radioactive minerals.

43. As the use of radiation sources in everyday life was expanding, the work of the Scientific Committee would increase, and its six observer States should therefore be made full members, a process initiated by General Assembly resolution 61/109. The budget for the 2010-2011 biennium had already covered a major portion of the financial implications and his delegation was willing to work with the Committee in further exploring ideas for addressing the remaining minor portion.

44. **Mr. Rahmonov** (Tajikistan) commended the Secretary-General for convening the high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security in September 2011. Tajikistan had inherited numerous uranium mines, mine dumps and uranium tailing ponds from the Soviet period. Environmentally hazardous facilities in need of restructuring and decommissioning were located close to human settlements, posing a serious threat to the environment and the population. His Government had established a legal framework for nuclear and radiation safety and security to ensure the safe management and rehabilitation of areas contaminated by uranium mining and related activities. The Nuclear Radiation Safety Agency was the State regulatory authority and an annual amount was allocated for preparedness activities.

45. Tajikistan recognized the central role of IAEA in strengthening nuclear safety and security and the contributions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other organizations, in cooperation with IAEA, to provide environmental and health monitoring in Tajikistan. Several projects had been implemented, but many problems remained unresolved. He encouraged States and international organizations with the relevant expertise to provide technical assistance and share their experience in management and rehabilitation of contaminated sites and territories.

46. The Fukushima accident had affected public confidence in nuclear power and IAEA had an important role to play in further improving the nuclear safety regime. Some States had decided not to use, to phase out or to reconsider the use of nuclear power. Efficient use of renewable energy resources was increasingly important. Tajikistan had enormous hydropower potential which could help to reduce detrimental atmospheric emissions as well as to remedy the energy shortage in his country and in the region.

47. **Mr. Kodama** (Japan) said that, in the light of the tragic nuclear accident caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami earlier that year, his country recognized all the more the critical role played by the Scientific Committee. He welcomed the international community's commitment to strengthening nuclear safety, as reaffirmed at the United Nations high-level meeting on nuclear safety and security in September 2011. The Secretary-General, in his closing statement at that meeting, had asked the General Assembly to provide the Scientific Committee with the necessary resources to accomplish its task. In view of the importance of ensuring the safety and security of human beings and the environment, it was essential that the Scientific Committee be given sufficient resources to continue its authoritative study of the effects of radiation. The proactive use of objective scientific knowledge could inform the public and thus free people from unnecessary anxiety, while preventing the spread of harmful and groundless rumours about radiation.

48. **Mr. Christopher** (Marshall Islands) said that his country, during its status as a United Nations Trust Territory, had been the site of 67 large-scale nuclear tests conducted by the Administering Authority, the United States. During that period, his country's petitions to halt the testing had resulted in two Trusteeship resolutions that authorized further testing while providing assurances to the people of the Marshall Islands. Despite the many subsequent actions taken to address those events, significant challenges remained. The Marshall Islands welcomed the support of the Pacific Island Forum for addressing that issue at the United Nations, as expressed in the Forum Leaders Communiqué issued in September 2011. It also welcomed the 2011 joint statement of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and the Secretary-General, which

referred to cooperation to address the ongoing impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific.

49. In 2010, the Secretary-General had been requested to report on the effects of atomic radiation in the Marshall Islands. Appropriate engagement at the United Nations could help the Marshall Islands to move forward in understanding the past, bringing closure to a sad chapter in history, and to understand how the international community could assist in addressing future remediation and other challenges. Attention should be drawn to the body of scientific work that assessed the consequences of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. He looked forward to continued positive and productive discussion with key bilateral partners in the context of United Nations engagement.

50. **Mr. Berger** (Germany) said that work of the Scientific Committee played a crucial role in improving international scientific understanding of levels of exposure to ionizing radiation and its health and environmental effects. The accident in Fukushima in March had highlighted the importance of that work as the Scientific Committee had undertaken the additional task of supporting Japanese efforts to deal with the consequences of the accident, a reaction that was fully in line with the priorities of the international community.

51. The Scientific Committee's analysis of the implications of the Chernobyl accident in 1986 had contributed significantly to understanding the consequences of exposure to accidental releases of radionuclides. Improving knowledge about the effects of atomic radiation, sharing the latest scientific results and using them to develop better protection measures and more effective technologies was increasingly critical as the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes continued to grow. A long-term solution to the pending membership issue should be found at the present session. Germany was ready to facilitate the forthcoming resolution and would do its utmost to ensure that the Scientific Committee could continue its important scientific work.

52. **Mr. Zdorov** (Belarus) said he hoped that delegations would have sufficient time to analyse the report and to hold consultations on the draft resolution on the effects of atomic radiation. His delegation welcomed the Committee's work on assessment of the consequences of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi

nuclear power plant. The resources available to the Scientific Committee should be strengthened, one option being to grant full membership to the six States that had applied for membership in 2007. An expansion of the membership to 27 members would be an important milestone in the Committee's work and streamlining of procedures should obviate the need for an increase in resources or in the duration of the annual sessions.

53. Belarus had attended meetings of the Scientific Committee as an observer since 2008 and was interested in continuing its work as a full member. Belarusian scientists could make a significant contribution, as demonstrated by their involvement in the preparation of a number of the Scientific Committee's reports, including on issues related to Chernobyl, and their participation in the project to study the consequences of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi plant. In that connection, cooperation activities with Japan were also being implemented. Belarus was studying the effects of radiation on man and the environment not only in the context of Chernobyl programmes, but also through a scientific support programme for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus.

54. In conclusion, the process of joining the Scientific Committee had been unnecessarily prolonged and did not facilitate work of the observer countries. Member States should take a decision to expand the membership during the current session.

55. **Mr. Sanabria** (Spain) said that medical exposure to nuclear radiation remained an international priority in radiation protection. The fiftieth session of the Scientific Committee had taken place shortly after the nuclear accident in Japan and twenty-five years after the Chernobyl accident. In Oviedo, Spain, the prestigious Prince of Asturias Award for Concord had just been awarded to the "heroes of Fukushima" as an expression of recognition and admiration for the reaction of Japanese society to the catastrophe. The work of the Scientific Committee would certainly contribute to mitigating the consequences of the accident and improving protection measures against future incidents.

56. The issue of expanding the membership of the Scientific Committee to include six additional States had been pending for five years and any further delay would be detrimental to its work. The scientists from

observer countries should be given equal status with the full members in recognition of their services. An estimated budgetary increase of about \$50,000 could not be an insoluble obstacle. The resolution to be adopted at the current session should include an invitation to the six countries that currently had observer status to become full members of the Committee and to designate their scientific representatives.

57. **Mr. Zhukov** (Russian Federation) said that his country supported international efforts to minimize the negative impact of atomic radiation from both natural and man-made sources on human health and the environment. The Russian Federation, which together with Ukraine and Belarus had suffered the impact of the Chernobyl accident, had the highest international standards for nuclear safety, as confirmed by many IAEA missions to assess various aspects of safe operation of Russian nuclear facilities.

58. The accident at Fukushima had demonstrated the need to strengthen the international legal framework for nuclear safety. In June 2011, his Government had suggested that existing gaps in international instruments in that area should be addressed by making amendments to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. It had also made suggestions to improve IAEA safety standards. He hoped that those initiatives would receive broad support.

59. **Mr. Shin Dong Ik** (Republic of Korea) said that his country, as the fifth largest generator of nuclear power, currently operated 21 nuclear power plants and had five more under construction. It would continue to implement its "low carbon, green growth" policy and hoped to share with the international community its accumulated experience in the construction and operation of nuclear power plants.

60. The Republic of Korea had sought membership of the Scientific Committee and had participated in meetings as an observer since 2008. It would contribute to the project on the assessment of the levels and effects of radiation exposure following the Fukushima accident and experts from the Republic of Korea would participate in all four expert groups.

61. In consultations in Vienna, Member States had expressed their wish to settle the membership issue by the end of 2011. Although budgetary concerns had been raised, the participation of the six observer

countries over the past three years had not posed any additional financial burden. In addition, the 2010-2011 biennium budget already covered a substantial part of the monetary implications of such an expansion. If necessary, members, including the Republic of Korea, could voluntarily cover the travel costs of their experts. His Government appreciated the efforts of the secretariat and the Chairman in undertaking numerous tasks with limited financial and human resources. Settlement of the membership issue would enable the Scientific Committee to focus on its scientific and technological tasks.

62. In conclusion, he drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the effects of atomic radiation in the Marshall Islands (A/66/378) and its reference to the request of the Secretary-General that the Scientific Committee be provided with all the resources necessary to accomplish its task of a full assessment of the levels of exposure and radiation risks attributable to the Fukushima accident. The added expertise of the six observer countries would greatly contribute to that process.

63. **Ms. Miháliková** (Slovakia) said that nuclear energy was still an important source of power for many countries and careful evaluation of its positive and negative aspects was important. She welcomed the active engagement of the Scientific Committee in assessing the impact on health and the environment of the accident at the Fukushima plant and in publishing updated information on its website. As children were more affected by radiation than adults, she welcomed the decision to concentrate in the near future on the assessment of radiation effects and risks for children.

64. Understanding the effects of low-dosage exposure would help to formulate international standards and to protect the public and professionals. Her delegation also appreciated the work on a new strategy for data collection and encouraged United Nations organizations and agencies to provide data. The Scientific Committee, with the assistance of relevant organizations and Governments, should share the information with the general public as well as with the scientific community.

65. Slovak experts had participated in the work of the Scientific Committee on the effects of atomic radiation since its establishment, one of their main areas of expertise being the effects of radiation releases related to nuclear energy production. Slovakia had been

appointed to fill the seat vacated by the former Czechoslovakia and the continuing cooperation and participation of experts from both successor countries as members of one delegation could serve as an example of how to approach the issue of membership. Her delegation was ready to support any cost-neutral solution that would help achieve a broad consensus without compromising the efficiency of the work of the Scientific Committee.

66. **Mr. Nissilä** (Finland) said that Finland had contributed to the work of the Scientific Committee as an observer since 2006 and should now become a full member. The decision should be taken in 2011, as a further extension of the discussion would take too much time from substantive work. As a full member, his country would make a greater contribution to the work of the Scientific Committee. Finland had already provided national input in response to the Scientific Committee's surveys, while many publications by Finnish scientists had been cited in its reports. Electronic databases developed by Finland could help to facilitate the global surveys on population doses received from diagnostic medicine.

67. Finland had provided the Committee with reports on internal exposure to radioactive substances and had contributed to assessing the consequences of the nuclear accident in Japan. More than 20 Finnish experts were willing to contribute to the future work of the Scientific Committee. Various solutions for the financial implications of new members were possible and Finland would consider the possibility of paying for the travel and accommodation costs of its representatives. New members would bring an important contribution to the scientific work of the Scientific Committee.

68. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said that international peace and security continued to be threatened by the existence of over 23,000 nuclear warheads, half of them ready for immediate use. The use of just a small part of that arsenal would lead to a nuclear winter and the destruction of all forms of life on the planet. It was unacceptable that certain nuclear-weapon States continued to resort to nuclear deterrence as part of their security doctrine. The use of nuclear arms was an illegal and totally immoral act that could not be justified by any circumstance or doctrine of security, as their use would be a flagrant violation of international norms relating to prevention of genocide. The only way to guarantee that they were not used

would be their elimination and prohibition under strict international control, subject to a legally binding international regime.

69. The work of the Scientific Committee was a source of expert, balanced and objective information on the issues within its competence. It was therefore essential to maintain and strengthen links of cooperation between the Committee, Member States and various United Nations system organizations, such as WHO, IAEA and UNEP. The concerns expressed by the representatives of the Marshall Islands, as contained in paragraph 9 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/66/378) should be given careful consideration.

70. Despite limited resources, Cuba had provided significant cooperation to its brother nation Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Since 1990, Cuba and Ukraine had carried out a rehabilitation programme for victims, who were mainly children. So far, Cuba had provided treatment for over 25,000 patients from Ukraine and other countries. The programme also had a significant scientific impact, providing primary data on internal contamination in children from the affected areas. That information was disseminated at the most relevant scientific events and was used by international bodies, including IAEA and the Scientific Committee, in their studies of the effects of atomic radiation. The Scientific Committee had also cited Cuban papers produced by that programme in publications reviewing the impact of the Chernobyl accident and had shown interest in receiving more data.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.